

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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USIA-15 ACDA-10 SAJ-01 OMB-01 SAM-01 IO-10 TRSE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4111

INFO AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

USMISSION USBERLIN

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

CINC EUR VAIHINGEN

CINC USAREUR HEIDELBERG

CINC USAFE RAMSTEIN

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PLEASE PASS USIA, DOD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MILI, GW

SUBJECT: FRG MEDIA REACTION TO US DEFENSE CABINET
CHANGE

BEGIN SUMMARY: PRESIDENT FORD'S NOMINATION OF DONALD
RUMSFELD TO SUCCEED JAMES SCHLESINGER AS SECRETARY OF
DEFENSE RECEIVED LEAD STORY COVERAGE IN ALMOST ALL FRG
NEWSPAPERS NOVEMBER 4. EDITORIAL ANALYSIS AND COMMENT
CONTINUES TODAY. MANY PAPERS SEE THE CHANGE REFLECTING
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SALT II STRATEGY CONSIDERATIONS MADE BY PRESIDENT FORD.

THE MORE CONSERVATIVE WEST GERMAN PRESS MAINTAINS THAT THE SCHLESINGER DEPARTURE UNFORTUNATELY REMOVES A KNOWLEDGEABLE OPPONENT OF SOVIET FORCE FROM THE SCENE. MODERATE AND PRO-SPD JOURNALS ON THE OTHER HAND GENERALLY WELCOME THE CHANGE AS AN INDICATION THAT THE PRESIDENT IS ANXIOUS TO ACHIEVE A SALT II AGREEMENT. NEARLY ALL AGREE THAT SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S DEPARTURE WILL BE INITIALLY MISSED BY HIS OFFICIAL FRG INTERLOCUTORS, PRIMARILY DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER. END SUMMARY.

1. MANY OF THE HEADLINES ATTEMPTED TO PLAY UP THE DRAMA OF THE PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT, SPEAKING OF A "SERIOUS CRISIS," A "POLITICAL STORM," A "BLOODY FREE-FOR-ALL," AND "FOGGY NIGHTTIME ACTION." A NOVEMBER 5 "FRANKFURTER RUNDSCHAU" ARTICLE WAS HEADLINED "THE WEEKEND MASSACRE AND KISSINGER'S ROLE...WITH SCHLESINGER AND COLBY DISAPPEAR TWO OPPONENTS OF THE AMERICAN FOREIGN MINISTER."

2. "DIE WELT'S" HEINZ BARTH ARGUED THAT: "SCHLESINGER'S DISMISSAL IS ONE OF THE DARKEST NEWS ITEMS OF RECENT MONTHS. A WHITE HOUSE CAMARILLA, OF WHICH KISSINGER WAS THE CENTRAL FIGURE, HAS BROUGHT ABOUT SCHLESINGER'S FALL. THE PREDOMINANT ISSUE IN THE RIVALRY BETWEEN KISSINGER AND SCHLESINGER WAS U.S. SECURITY AND MILITARY BALANCE BETWEEN THE TWO SUPERPOWERS, AN ISSUE AFFECTING THE SURVIVAL OF THE WEST AND OF WHAT HAS BEEN LEFT OF THE FREE WORLD AFTER SIX YEARS OF EAST-WEST DETENTE POLICY."

3. IN THE NOVEMBER 5 "FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG" ADALBERT WEINSTEIN COMMENTED THAT-"THE MAIN LINE SCHLESINGER FOLLOWED LOOKED OUT TO A LARGE EXTENT FOR OUR INTEREST. WHY WAS THE GIFTED DEFENSE SECRETARY OUSTED THEN? IF ONE CAN SEPARATE OUT FROM THIS QUESTION ELECTION CONSIDERATIONS, WHICH MADE IT OPPORTUNE FOR THE PRESIDENT TO SHOW A STRONG HAND. THE TENSION BETWEEN SCHLESINGER AND KISSINGER REMAINS. THAT SCHLESINGER REJECTED KISSINGER'S DETENTE POLICY IS ONLY UNCLASSIFIED

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HALF THE TRUTH. SCHLESINGER TOO SOUGHT DETENTE. HOWEVER FOR HIM DETERRENCE SHOULD ALSO REMAIN ON BOTH SIDES, AND AFTER VLADIVOSTOK THAT NO LONGER SEEMED TO BE THE CASE.

4. ON NOVEMBER 4, GUENTHER GILLESSEN, ALSO OF THE "FAZ", HAD WRITTEN: "SCHLESINGER'S DISCHARGE MEANS THAT THE BRAKE IN THE SALT NEGOTIATIONS IS BEING

RELEASED BY THE AMERICAN SIDE. THE EUROPEAN NATO ALLIES HAVE REASON TO REGRET SCHLESINGER'S DEPARTURE. HE FREQUENTLY ADMONISHED THEM, HE CRITICIZED THEIR RELAXING DEFENSE EFFORTS, BUT MOST OF HIS CRITICISM WAS JUSTIFIED. MOREOVER, HE NOTICEABLY INCREASED THE VALUE OF U.S. PRESENCE IN EUROPE. HE INCREASED THAT PRESENCE ABOVE ALL BY STATIONING TWO ADDITIONAL BRIGADES IN GERMANY."

5. DIETER SCHROEDER IN THE "SUEDEDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG"

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WROTE: "BY DISMISSING SCHLESINGER, PRESIDENT FORD SIGNALS TO MOSCOW HIS SERIOUS INTEREST IN CONTINUING SALT. SCHLESINGER HAS BECOME THE VICTIM OF A STRUGGLE FOR POWER WITH KISSINGER. CONFRONTED WITH CHOOSING BETWEEN KISSINGER AND SCHLESINGER, THE PRESIDENT HAD TO DECIDE AGAINST SCHLESINGER, BECAUSE KISSINGER'S DISMISSAL WOULD HAVE RUINED SALT AND WOULD HAVE JEOPARDIZED U.S. POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HOWEVER, SCHLESINGER'S DISMISSAL HAS NOT MADE KISSINGER'S POSITION IN THE SALT NEGOTIATIONS EASIER."
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6. THE LEFT-CENTER "FRANKFURTER RUNDSCHAU" REASONED: "SCHLESINGER PURSUED THE STRATEGY OF NUCLEAR DETERRENCE WITH UNPRECEDENTED PERFECTION. HOWEVER, IT WAS THAT VERY PERFECTION THAT LED TO HIS FALL. HIS NEW ARMAMENT PROJECTS WERE ABOUT TO THWART SALT. IN KISSINGER'S VIEW, TIME FOR CONCLUDING SALT II IS RUNNING OUT. THUS, PRESIDENT FORD HAD TO CHOOSE BETWEEN SCHLESINGER AND KISSINGER.

7. WOLFGANG BORGMANN IN THE "STUTTGARTER ZEITUNG" REASONED THAT PRESIDENT FORD "HAS NOW GIVEN BREZHNEV A SIGNAL" THAT HE DESIRES A SUCCESSFUL SALT II OUTCOME. BORGMANN FEELS THE SOVIET COMMUNIST LEADER HAS THEREBY STRENGTHENED HIS INTERNAL POSITION IN PREPARATION FOR NEXT FEBRUARY'S PARTY CONGRESS.

8. SEVERAL ARTICLES SUMMARIZING BONN'S REACTION TO SCHLESINGER'S DEPARTURE FOCUS ON THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WHICH SCHLESINGER HAD REACHED WITH DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER. ACCORDING TO "DIE WELT; "IN A PRIVATE LETTER TO SCHLESINGER, LEBER THANKED HIM FOR THE LONG YEARS OF FRIENDLY COOPERATION.. NO ONE IN BONN DARES ANSWER THE QUESTION WHETHER SCHLESINGER'S DEPARTURE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS AN INDICATION OF SOFTENING U.S. POLICY VIS-A-VIS THE USSR. IN THE VIEW OF SPD FOREIGN AFFAIRS EXPERT KURT MATTICK, THE DIALOGUE OF DETENTE WITH THE USSR AS INITIATED BY KISSINGER CAN BE CONTINUED NOW WITHOUT SCHLESINGER'S APPLYING THE BRAKE. BONN FOREIGN OFFICE QUARTERS POINTED TO THE CLOSE TIES BETWEEN SCHMIDT AND KISSINGER BUT LEFT NO DOUBT ABOUT THEIR HIGH ESTEEM FOR SCHLESINGER."

9. IN A SIMILAR VEIN, THE "KOELNER STADT ANZEIGER" STATED: "THE BONN GOVERNMENT HAS REFRAINED FROM COMMENTING OFFICIALLY. BONN DOES NOT EXPECT SUB-

STANTIAL CHANGE IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY. THE ONE WHO REGRETS SCHLESINGER'S DEPARTURE THE MOST IS LEBER, WHOSE RELATIONS WITH SCHLESINGER HAVE BEEN MARKED BY FRIENDSHIP. BONN FOREIGN OFFICE QUARTERS REJECT THE VIEW THAT SCHLESINGER HAD BEEN AN OBSTACLE TO DETENTE. UNCLASSIFIED

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THEY SEE A FAVORABLE ASPECT IN KISSINGER'S COMING OUT OF THE FIRING LINE BY RELIQUISHING HIS POST AS NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER. QUARTERS OF BOTH THE DEFENSE MINISTRY AND THE FOREIGN OFFICE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THERE WILL BE GOOD COOPERATION WITH SCHLESINGER'S SUCCESSOR DONALD RUMSFELD."

10. A BONN "GENERAL ANZEIGER" ARTICLE BY WOLF BELL REPORTED THAT BONN POLITICAL QUARTERS SEE IN SCHLESINGER'S DEPARTURE NO CHANGE IN THE U.S. POLICY OF PROMOTING NATIONALIZATION AND STANDARDIZATION OF NATO ARMAMENTS. NEVERTHELESS, THERE IS SOME "UNEASINESS" THAT THIS CHANGE MAY INCREASE U.S. READINESS TO YIELD TO THE SOVIETS IN DISARMAMENT MATTERS.

11. FINALLY, SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS CARRIED REPORTS FROM WASHINGTON ON RUMSFELD'S BACKGROUND AND CAREER, REFERRING TO HIM AS THE WHITE HOUSE "EMINENCE GRISE" AND AS AN EFFECTIVE ORGANIZER. DESPITE HIS NATO EXPERIENCE, THE "SUEDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG" OBSERVED THAT HE "LACKS THE SCIENTIFIC QUALIFICATIONS OF HIS PREDECESSOR." HILLENBRAND

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